

**AMENDMENT TO THE SPECIFICATION**

Please amend paragraphs [0004], [0017], and [0020] – [0023], as follows:

**[0004]** A climbing shoe is constituted of a flexible upper, generally low or ~~semi-high~~ mid-height, made of a flexible and inextensible material, and provided at its upper end with a system for retaining the foot, such as a lace.

**[0017]** As shown in FIG. 1, the article of footwear or climbing shoe 1, according to the invention, has:

- an upper 10 made of a flexible material, such as leather or a substantially inextensible textile, having a low or mid-height ~~semi-high~~ configuration as shown ~~in~~ on the drawing, and provided with tightening means 11 of the lace type or the like;
- an insole 12 peripherally assembled to the upper 10 by a seam 12a of the Strobel type or zigzag type, the insole 12 being flexible;
- a reinforcement insert 14 extending substantially over the entire surface of the insole 12 and interposed between the latter and the outer sole, the object of this insert 14 being to help control as best as possible the deformations of the bottom assembly of the shoe during supports. Depending on the characteristics sought for the climbing shoe, this insert 14 can be more or less rigid; it can also be omitted. This type of construction with the insert is described in the patent documents FR 2 840 163 and US 2003/0221337, ~~French Patent Application FR 02-06811 and U.S. Patent Application No. 10/259,826~~, both commonly owned herewith, the latter being incorporated by reference thereto in its entirety particularly for its disclosure of the aforementioned insert;
- a heel stiffener 20 and an outer sole 30 that are described more specifically hereinafter;
- a front protective peripheral strip 15 applied to the front of the upper 10 and a strap or stay 17 surrounding the heel portion of the upper 10, and having two arms 18 and a rear portion 19.

[0020] The stiffener 20 has a rear wall 21 that is substantially vertical, two lateral walls ~~or edges~~ 25, and a base 26. The stiffener ~~it~~ is extended forwardly by its base 26 substantially up to the front limit of the zone of the plantar arch, and therefore to the rear of the metatarsophalangeal articulation zone. The lateral walls ~~edges~~ 25 stop substantially at the rear of the zone of the plantar arch. The rear wall 21, in particular, but also the lateral walls ~~edges~~ 25, together define a rounded volume corresponding as best as possible to the form of the heel and adapted to receive and comfortably house the wearer's heel. The lateral walls ~~edges~~ 25 act to protect the ~~rear lateral edges~~ lateral sides at the rear of the upper in the same manner as the front peripheral protective strip 15 protect the toe and front lateral sides of the upper.

[0021] At the junction between its rear wall 21 and each of the lateral edges ~~walls~~ 25, the heel stiffener has a notch 22 adapted to allow for the relative "pivoting" of the rear portion relative to ~~these~~ the lateral walls edges when in use, and specifically when putting on the shoe. As can be seen in FIG. 2, for example, the upper edges 25' of the lateral walls 25 extend primarily rearwardly and the edge 21' of the rear wall 21 extends generally downwardly to intersections with notches 22. The notches are shown to lie on the upper, spaced above upper edges of the outer sole 30.

[0022] As a matter of fact, the rear wall 21 has a very nesting rounded shape adapted to properly envelop the heel, and the strap 17 reinforces this effect since it acts to exert a thrusting effort of the heel toward the front. When putting the shoe on, it is necessary to "pivot" the wall 21 of the heel stiffener relative to the lateral ~~edges~~ walls 25 thereof in order to actually allow for the insertion of the foot.

[0023] The heel stiffener 20 also has recesses or housings adapted to facilitate the positioning and the cementing of the pieces that are applied next, namely the strap 17 and the outer sole 30. Primarily, those are recesses 25a at the front of each lateral ~~edge wall~~ wall 25 and recesses 26a underneath the base 26 for receiving the lower ends 18a of the arms 18 of the strap 17. It is possible for another recess 21a to be provided in the rear wall 21 to receive the rear portion 19 of the strap 17.